

SOME METHODS FOR CREATING WRAPPING PAPERS AND OTHER DECORATIVE PAPERS

..With painting and print-making techniques...

The ideas listed here are only a few of the many methods that can be used for making decorative papers. This is an area for unlimited possibilities for experimentation with many painting and simple print-making techniques. Try combining methods for interesting variations. See books on "Print-making" on your reading list for more ideas.

SOME PAPERS TO USE

Any paper that takes paint well and that takes paint well and that can be folded or rolled around a package without tearing (if you are using this for a wrapping).. such as brown or white roll paper, shelf papers, drawing papers, tissue, newsprint, want ad sections of newspapers, sack papers, print shop scraps, magazine papers, rice paper, construction paper, foils, paper toweling, mimeo backing sheets, etc.

SOME PAINTS AND INKS TO USE:

tempera (liquid or powder type or cake type)
water colors (pan or tube type)
acrylic polymer paints
finger paints
stamp pads with various colored inks
textile paint (if printing on fabric)
paints in aerosol spray cans



Water soluble block printing ink
(easy to clean up with water)
do not use on fabrics
Oil soluble block printing ink
(most professional type of color to use, but must be cleaned up with turpentine, use on cloth

SOME GENERAL POINTERS: (overall repeat type designs)

1. Work for an all-over design on paper (avoid designs just in corners--won't show when package is wrapped)
2. Put on background color first and built up layers of the design on top
3. Overlap, "bump", or connect forms of design for unity (stencil forms, tonal areas of spatter, sponge, linear forms with "junk" items, string prints, carved lines)
4. Repeat the design unit in an organized method to avoid a cluttered, "hodge-podge" look on your paper (try overlap repeats, inverted, diagonal pattern, parallel,)
5. Practice the method and idea on a scrap paper first
6. Try using a "pad" under your paper (newspapers or magazines) when stamping

SOME QUICK WAYS TO APPLY BACKGROUND COLOR:

1. SPONGE: Sponge should be damp but not dripping wet. Dip into pan water colors or paint tempera on to sponge with brush. Sponge can be stippled, swirled, used with stencil, cut into shapes---the larger the paper, the larger the sponge! Some sponge substitutes: sponge rubber, kleenex, powder puffs, terry cloth, etc.
2. BRAYER: Roll brayer over tempera or water soluble block printing ink on a glass slab--then roll on paper. Try putting shapes or textured surfaces under paper for different effects. Tie string on brayer for line effect. Paint rollers, lint rollers, cylindrical forms might be substituted for regular rubber brayer.
3. BIG BRUSHES: Use wide paint brushes (1"-3") for applying paint. Use dry brush technique, stipple up and down, or try; damp "froc brush" (see split brush, p.3)
4. FLUSHED COLOR: Drop paint on wet saturated paper, let run, blend, and dry. For bright, fresh effects, avoid using complementary colors (the opposite colors on the color wheel) as it may give a grey effect. Try the "neighboring colors".
5. FINGER PAINTING: Good for background of large, sweeping motions. Be sure to use a slick surface paper such as regular finger painting paper, shiny shelf paper, coated papers, slick cardboards. Use finger paint or substitute powder or liquid tempera and rub on to paper that has been saturated with thin wheat paste or starch. In addition to the hand, designs can be put on with pulled out with other "gadgets" such as wood scrap, cardboard, combs, sponges, etc.
6. CRAYON RESIST: Use old crayon stub and color over textured surfaces with a firm stroke. Or color with notched crayon for patterned effect. Run thin wash of tempera or water color over crayon for "resist" effect. Side of chalk works well for a quick background, too (but resist does not work as well as for crayon)
7. SPRAY PAINT: Put thinned tempera into insect spray gun or atomizer, or use spray in aerosol can (more expensive) Can be used with stencil forms for interesting tonal effects. (see also spatter paint suggestions on p, 3)

(backgrounds, continued)

8. WAX PAPER PRINTS: Paint with water colors or watery tempera on wax paper. Let paint collect in little droplets. Press the painted wax paper down on another paper. Press on the wax paper and droplets will spread out in various patterns. It works best to finish one color over the whole paper, let dry, and apply next color. Saran wrap, plastic bags, cellophane, etc. can be used also for droplets.
9. PAINT PRINTS: Cut shapes out of any paper (textured or plain), paint on it quickly, flip it over and press it on to another sheet of paper. Gives interesting textures. (check also methods on page 3 which could easily be used for getting background color)

TRY DESIGNS ON YOUR BACKGROUND COLOR AREAS WITH THESE METHODS:

SOLE RELIEF TYPE PRINTS (where the raised area of the design takes the color)

POTATO PRINTS: (or other vegetables—carrots, turnips, radishes, etc.) Cut a potato in half with a straight cut. Cut away part of potato and leave the design raised. Brush tempera on raised forms and "rock" potato on the paper while you press. Crayons or colored pencils that turn to paint when moistened also work well on moist potatoes. Push wire mesh or other textures into potato for various effects. Keep potato in water when not in use. Refrigerate for best results in preserving. Use "V-Cuts".

"ODDS & ENDS" PRINTS: (or "junk: prints or press-prints"). Brush paint on various objects and press them on paper. Press on scrap paper first to get rid of excess paint. Or press small items on to a stamp pad to pick up color. Try such items as edges of cardboard, popsicle sticks, can tops, cardboard tubes, clothes pins, spools, wood scraps, potato masher, bottle tops and caps, erasers, corks, jar tops, pastry wheels, paper cup rims, sink stoppers, pencil ends, any scrap item that will print.

SAMPLE BLOCK -TYPE PRINTS: Inner tube, cardboard, sheet cork, heavy felt, or similar flat type material can be cut into shapes and glued on to a block of wood or heavy cardboard. Paint on the raised forms or roll ink over them. Press block on to paper. Or put block under paper and burnish paper. If water soluble glue is used, do not use too much water in cleaning paint off the block. Check for interesting materials.

STRING PRINT IDEAS: For angular line designs, wrap string back and forth around a block of wood. Design can be formed on the front, back, and edges. Brush on paint and press. For curving lines, wind string around a brayer, tin can, rolling pin, dowel stick, curtain roller, etc. Apply paint and roll on paper. Designs of string can also be glued on to a block. Variety in designs can be tried by varying the thickness of strings, tie knots. For fuzzy effects, combine pine cleaners with the string. Other string substitutes: rubber bands, elastic, rick-rack, yarns, cords, etc.

GLUE PRINTS: Drip ducco cement or model airplane glue on a surface (wood, cardboard, glass, formica, etc.) let dry thoroughly, apply paint or ink, apply paper, and rub.

PULL-STRING DESIGNS: Fold paper. Pull string through a thinned tempera and squeeze off the excess paint between fingers. Place on right half of paper, fold over half on top. Leave string "tail" hanging out. Pull tail with one hand and press hard on paper with the other. Wiggle string as you pull for feathery effect. Repeat this with other colors of string. Try different kinds of string and various methods of folds in the paper (diagonal, vertical, horizontal) Try metallic paints for effects.

"SPIDERS": Drop a small blob of thinned tempera on paper. A medicine dropper is helpful for this. Blow on the blob with a straw and spread the paint. Drop on more blobs of different colors and blow more. Try air from vacuum cleaner to save your breath.

FOLD DYE PAPERS: Fold paper into various folds (silk span paper for model airplanes works well here, or try rice paper, paper toweling) Dip corners or edges into a dye solution or thinned tempera or colored inks. Unfold, refold, and re-dip into a different dish of color. Feathery, soft muted effects are obtained.

MARBELIZED PAPER or SWIRL PAPER:

Place water in a low pan slightly bigger than your paper. Line pan with foil paper for quicker clean-up. Drop small quantity of oil base paint (such as enamel) on top of water--it may need to be thinned first with turps or paint thinner. Stir water with stick till swirls and paint patterns form. Place paper on top of water briefly and pull off. Several colors can be swirled at once and most any kind of paper can be used. Experimenting can lead to fascinating results--try colored inks, blow the color, let paint settle and then pull a print, etc.. Main problem is drying time and space needed for the drying prints. An old method with many current adaptations.

CRACKLED PAPER:

Crumple a piece of paper by squeezing it gently in a pan or can of water--more pressure gives a finer crackle. Smooth it out on table or board and "flush color" on to the damp surface and let run. For bolder colors, let paper dry more and use the tempera with less water. While paint is still wet, you can "pull a print" from the crackle paper for unusual effects. Or try a crackle paper resist by coloring heavy crayon on paper before crumpling it. Try also painting on back side of wrinkled paper.

RESIST TECHNIQUES (in addition to crayon):

For design, color heavily on paper with wax crayon, wax candle, or oil crayon. Run thin tempera or water color over the paper and wax will resist the paint. Or "paint" out an area with rubber cement or Tri-Tix paste. Let dry and apply paint over areas. Let paint dry and rub off rubbery paste areas which will show the color of the paper. Spray paint, spatter paint, sponge, and brushes can all be used on paste resist areas.

SPLIT-BRUSH TECHNIQUE: Use a flat stiff brush for this. Divide bristles with small strip of paper or tagboard. With another brush, paint the divided bristles with different colors, light and dark. Wet brush gives different effects than a dry brush. Use for stripe and plaid effects. Remove paper strips for closer color effects.

STENCIL METHODS:

Stencils are a good way to apply repeated designs on a color background if design is clear and simple. Tagboard, backings from mimeograph stencils, stencil papers, can be used to cut stencil. Dry brush, brayers, sponge, spatter paint, spray cans are some ways to put color through stencil open areas--but avoid much use of water with sponges and brushes for a good stencil effect. Move stencils on dry paint areas for interesting overlapping area effects. Always mask out areas that are not to be colored.

SPATTER PAINTING:

Can be use if spray guns are not available or when only small areas are involved. Use a stiff brush such as a toothbrush, scrub brush, vegetable brush, fingernail brush. "Feed" brush by applying paint with another brush and tap off excess (Too much paint or water will cause blobs) A "dryer" paint will give a finer spray than more watery paint. Pull knife or stick across brush with scraping motion away from body--or try the "dirty thumb" method by pulling thumb across brush. With practice, interesting tonal effects can be achieved, often with stencil edges. Stiff brush can also be flicked over a piece of chalk or water crayon for spatter effect.

MONOPRINTS: (or "pulling a print from a flat surface")

Roll ink on a flat slick surface such as glass, plastic, hardboard, cookie sheet, record album cover, etc. Draw a design in the ink with a pencil or stick. Place paper on glass, rub gently and pull print. Design can also be drawn on paper while paper is on the surface. Prints can be pulled from finger paintings in similar manner.

EGG CARTON AND MEAT TRAY PRINTS:

A good example of a simple approach to the incised relief or "white line" print. Draw a design into surface of meat tray, egg carton, polystyrene, etc. with a fat pencil point or wide ball point pen or stick. Brush on paint with minimum of water. Print design on paper. Good textural effects can be printed by just painting on the textural patterns of some meat trays. Reprint designs over dry printed areas.